

Show Him I Care by orphan_account

Series: [Byler in College \[6\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: M/M

Language: English

Characters: Mike Wheeler, Original Male Character(s), Will Byers

Relationships: Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-09-03

Updated: 2018-09-03

Packaged: 2022-04-23 02:34:27

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,418

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

On the coldest day of the year, Will receives a letter from Mike.

Show Him I Care

December 5th, 1989

Will sat curled up in the big armchair in the living room, frowning as he looked between his sketchpad and the photograph he was recreating.

“What’s up?” Will jumped; he was so preoccupied that he hadn’t noticed Tyler, his roommate, come in. “No class today?” he added, noticing that Will was still in his pyjamas, despite it being ten-thirty in the morning. Will shook his head

“Professor Callaghan cancelled all our classes until the snow clears.”

“Seriously?”

“Yup, says he can’t get his car through it.” Will set down his sketchpad and cradled his cup of coffee in his hands, watching Tyler make his breakfast.

“You realise that almost certainly won’t be until after Christmas?” he said in disbelief, pouring cereal into a bowl.

“I know. He’s posting our assignments to us, apparently, but he set us a few things to get on with until then.”

“Lucky bastard. Wish my lectures would get cancelled,” he added bitterly. Will laughed into his coffee, tutting as he steamed up his glasses for the hundredth time. He was wiping them on his sweater when Tyler asked, “What are you working on? Why the frowny face?”

“Just a simple re-creation for a bit of extra credit, but I can’t get the lighting right.” He held up the pad, and Tyler looked impressed.

“Looks good to me.”

Will smiled. “Sure it does, your major is in modern architecture,” he answered mischievously.

“Rude,” was the slightly haughty response. Will grinned and returned to his drawing. “I’m popping to the store,” Tyler said when he’d finished eating. “Do you need anything?”

Will thought for a moment before replying. “No thanks, but could you check the mail when you come back?”

“Sure thing. Later.”

About twenty minutes later, the door opened again, and Will shivered momentarily as the warm air rushed into the hallway. Tyler closed it quickly.

“Freezing out there,” he grumbled. “I need to run as I’m late for my lecture, but there’s a letter for you. Your boyfriend’s handwriting, by the look of it.” Will’s eyes lit up as he took it.

“Thanks, Tyler. Hope your lecture goes well.” The door opened and shut again, and Will tore open the letter. Mike’s uneven print covered the paper, and it was dated from nearly a week ago: the snow had clearly slowed it down.

Dear Will,

I’m sorry if this arrives late – it’s practically a white-out here, so God knows how long it’ll be before you read this. Of course, if you haven’t replied within two weeks I will have to assume that it hasn’t arrived at all, in which case I will be calling the police to get them to arrest the weather.

Will rolled his eyes affectionately. God, his boyfriend was a dork.

I hope you’re okay and that it’s not as cold in Kentucky as it is in Illinois. Weird how it’s been like three months and I still can’t believe we’re living in two completely different states. Sorry, that’s not cheerful. Is it obvious that I’m seriously missing you? But it’s cool, I get to see you in like... three

weeks? That's not so long, I guess.

Anyway, dramatic day yesterday. Basically the snow came out of nowhere and no one was ready for it. I couldn't actually get to class because the roads hadn't been cleared or anything. It was awesome, I just stayed home, ate snacks and played Exile on Elliot's Atari. Isn't college awesome? That said, I did have to deal with having his girlfriend there in the evening, and she's kind of annoying. She even stayed over, and I won't give any details, but let's just say that I didn't sleep well last night, and coincidentally Elliot chose today to take his bedsheets to the laundry. Yikes. (Will winced.)

There is, however, something kind of important I wanted to tell you. It's nothing awful! It's just, you know how you told me that your college friends know we're together? And you know how I told you that my friends didn't know? Weeeeeeeell, they kind of do now.

Will's eyes widened in surprise. Mike had never voluntarily told anyone about them outside of the Party. He kept reading, intrigued.

This is the bit which I really hope isn't a problem. Basically the reason they found out was that I left your last letter lying around. One of them found it and saw your signoff ("Love, Will") and, well, figured the rest out. I'm sorry if this makes you uncomfortable, I swear it was an accident. The plus side is that for the most part they're cool with it. I hope you can be proud of me. I even told them I like both guys and girls. I know it's a weird situation, but it feels kind of... good? Like I don't have to tiptoe around anymore.

That said, it has led to one rather peculiar evening. The guys took me to this gay club downtown, which I swear I am never going to again. It was kind of nice, in its way, and it's good that Chicago has somewhere like it. But I think most people go there to hook up, and obviously not a single person in our group was there to do that, so it was just kind of awkward having to tell the four people who asked me out that I already have a boyfriend. And God, the others were embarrassing. They got absolutely wasted and spent two and a half hours dancing and pretending to make

out with each other until the bouncers came and asked them to leave for being too out of control.

All in all, it's been a really strange week. I really wish you were here so I could talk about this with you in person. But I hope you're staying warm and that your classes are going well. I can't wait to hear from you.

Love, Mike

Will skimmed through the letter again, his face blank and thoughtful. So Mike was out... Honestly, he didn't mind how it had happened. As far as he recalled there was nothing particularly incriminating or humiliating in the letter, which was a relief. As for Mike's first gay club experience... well, honestly, that was just funny. The letter, though, was six days old, Will remembered; Mike had presumably been worrying about his reaction since then. Stirred by impulse, Will grabbed the phone from the table next to him and dialled Mike's number, which he knew by heart. It rang three times, and then there was a fumbled click as the line connected. "Hello?" Will's heart started to beat faster with nervous excitement as he recognised the voice.

"Hey, Mike, it's me."

"Will? Hi, I've missed you... wait, why aren't you in class?"

"Oh, we got the white-out too." He paused momentarily. "I've been reading your letter."

"Oh." There was silence. "Are you mad?"

"Mad? Why on earth would I be mad?"

"I don't know." Mike sounded uneasy and Will could picture him – biting nervously at his bottom lip and running a hand through his hair. "I guess because I accidentally let someone read your letter."

"I don't mind, not really. I'm really glad it's turned out well."

"Yeah," said Mike, sounding more enthusiastic. "It really has. Well, mostly."

“Mostly? What went wrong?”

“Oh, you know how people can be. One guy I hang out with has been turning his nose up at me since everyone found out, but it’s not someone I spent a load of time with. I don’t care too much. Or, I wouldn’t, if he hadn’t spray-painted ‘faggot’ on our apartment door.”

“What an asshole.”

“It was alright. The others found out and threatened to beat him up if he didn’t cough up the ninety dollars it cost to replace the door.” Mike sounded rather amused, Will thought, but then he remembered something Mike had said in his letter.

“Hey, Mike?”

“Yeah?”

“I’m super proud of you.”

“Oh. Thanks.” *Now he’s flustered*, Will thought fondly.

“Sorry, I know you’re probably embarrassed, but I wanted to say it.”

“No, it’s cool. I... really appreciate it.” His voice sounded muffled. Will glanced out of the window.

“The snow’s getting worse,” he said sadly. “I think I’ll have to go before the line disconnects.”

“Oh, okay. I love you, Will.”

“Love you too,” Will said as confidently as he could muster. He hesitated for a moment before replacing the receiver, before looking around at the empty, silent room.

Author’s Note:

I'm sorry, I really tried to give it a happy ending but literally could not figure out how. You really think I'm in charge here?

Anyway, thanks for reading and if you've read this far, I'm hoping you've enjoyed it. Please leave kudos and / or a comment if you did, or hit me up on Tumblr (@teaforoneplease)!

The next instalment will be happier, I swear to it.